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Shortgrass Country

by Monte Noelke

The fact that Interstate 10 crosses the Shortgrass Country and the Mexican border joins the area contributes to our low crime rate, I think. Flurries of misdeeds, of course pop up in various stations; over in San Angelo, hoods and hoodlets traffic in drugs and contrabands. I didn't say I was proud of our records. I meant to say compared to other parts of the nation, we have a better deal.

The citizens and law enforcement officers work together, too; or at least they do at Mertzon. Every now and then a call will come over the ranch radio circuit asking for a few hombres to come and help hunt for evidence on a rural matter.

Shortgrassers make good hands at finding minute specks of unusual things on the ground. So many of these herders like to hunt arrowheads more than they like to look for woolies and hollow horns under shade trees, they are absolutely the best of hands at spotting little flecks of ashes or minute slivers of paper.

Two or three weeks ago even the Border Patrol had the Sheriff call one of my neighbors to fly his airplane down to help hunt an orange package they thought had been dropped from a small aircraft.

After the request came over the air, a ghastly silence hit the service. No one made a call. We knew he was bound to be framed. As tired as the U.S. Border Patrol is of the Short Grass hollow horn fraternity for all those years we could work unpapered aliens without so much as tipping our hats to those boys, we've all been wondering when it was going to be their turn.

Up on a high hill, I watched him fly right to the drop. hoping all the time, he's do a lot of circling and act like he was having trouble finding the orange contraption.

Working off traffic fines in driver's education is probably what causes some of us to be so suspicious. Once a mike flipped on, playing a tape my neighbor Goat Whiskers the younger often plays; however as intrepid as Young Whiskers is known to be, he didn't utter a word.